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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2023

TAGS: PTER PREL PGOV KTFN PK BG NP SA IN PINR

SUBJECT: POLICE CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE TERRORISTS
ARRESTED IN KARNATAKA

REF: A. KOLKATA 52
B. KOLKATA 54

Classified By: Classified by Consul General David T. Hopper for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Police officials in the South India state of Karnataka arrested two individuals on January 9 who have since made statements suggesting that they are involved in plotting terror attacks in India. At least one of the suspects claimed to have received training at a Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LET) mujahideen training camp in Pakistan and to have lived with suspected terrorist Shahid Bilal in Karachi for a year. Press coverage of these claims has been extensive. The police are still investigating the case and have corroborated some parts of the suspects' statements. One of the suspects comes from a family known for its propagation of extremism. As of February 8, however, the police had not corroborated claims that either of the suspects has links to a wider terrorist infrastructure. Links to the full text of the police reports related to this case are available on Intellipedia, keyword Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Lashkar-e-Tayyiba %28LT/LeT%29). A more complete investigative report may be available by the end of February. End summary.

Initial reports in, investigation ongoing

12. (C) Shankar Bidari, Karnataka's Additional Director General of Police for Law and Order, gave us on February 8 two reports on this case. The first is the arrest report, the second covers the interrogation of both suspects.

13. (C) Based on these reports, the bio-data for the suspects is as follows:

A) Raziuddin Naser (alternate spellings: Riyazuddin, Rasuddein, Rasuddin) aka Mohammed Ghoush
DPOB: 05 JUNE 1987, Hyderabad
Father: Mohammed Nasiruddin, aka Moulana Nasiruddin
Address: No. 16-2-867/A/11, Jeevan Yarjung Colony, Hyderabad
Phone: 040-24551261, 65306613
Family Members: Mother: Tasleem Fatima; Brothers: Mohammed Imadduddin Amer (28 yrs), Mohammed Muqeemuddin Yasir (26 yrs), Mohammed Baleege Huddin Jabbar (22 yrs); Sisters: Aanesa Sumayya (27 yrs, married to Abdul Asim Khalid and living in Saudi Arabia), Saffiyya Batoor (24 yrs, married to Shykh Saifulla Khalid)

B) Asadulla Abu Baker Hinagi
DOB: 25 NOV 1985 (no POB listed)
Father: Abu Baker Hinagi
Address: 1415/A, Behind Madina Mosque, Chapparadahalli,
Hospet, Bellary district
Family: Brother: Syedulla Abu Baker Hinagi (23 yrs,
studying in Bangalore, phone: 98861 92674); Sister: Syeda
Yasmin (11 yrs)

Circumstances of arrest and detention

¶ 14. (C) Bidari told us that the two attracted police attention by acting suspiciously near the town of Honnali (approximately 250 kilometers northwest of Bangalore). The police searched and questioned the pair, who were unable to give satisfactory answers as to why they had certain items in their possession, including three U.S. dollars, fake identity cards, and a dagger. The police then detained the pair, who then admitted stealing four motorcycles, which the police have since recovered. Bidari said that the local police were prepared to treat the case as mere petty theft, but became suspicious as to why Raziuddin and Asadulla had not sold the stolen motorcycles. As police questioned them about their retention of the stolen motorcycles, the pair then began admitting their involvement in possible terrorist activities.

Background of one suspect a cause for concern

¶ 15. (C) Bidari told us that Raziuddin comes from a family known to harbor extremist views. Known as a fiery orator, Raziuddin's father is believed to have been involved in the

planning of the 2003 murder in Gujarat of Hiren Pandya, a former state Home Secretary. The father, Mohammed (aka Moulana) Nasiruddin, was arrested by the Gujarat police in Hyderabad in November 2004, but has not yet been tried in connection with this case. He is being held under terrorism prevention laws, which allow the government to hold him indefinitely. (Pandya, a hardline BJP official in Gujarat, was reportedly targeted because of his suspected involvement in the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat. Nine people have been arrested and convicted for Pandya's murder.) The police investigation report also claims that Raziuddin's father has possible links to the Pakistani intelligence service (ISI) and is a suspect in at least one other murder case. One of Raziuddin's brothers (Yasir), a member of the banned extremist group "Students Islamic Movement of India" (SIMI), is also in jail for distributing illegal posters related to the 1992 demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya.

¶ 16. (C) The police investigation report describes Asadulla as hailing from a middle-class family. It also says that he was a mediocre student with money problems who fell under the influence of "suspected Jihadi" Mohammed Asif, a medical student at KMC Medical College in Hubli, Karnataka. (Press reports indicate that police have also arrested Asif.)

Raziuddin "confesses" much, but how much is real?

¶ 17. (C) Raziuddin told the police that he traveled to Saudi Arabia (it is not clear from the report whether this was in 2005 or 2006) and met Abdul Samad, elder brother of Shahid Bilal, who the Indian press has reported was involved in terrorist activities in India, including the bombings in Hyderabad in August, 2007. Raziuddin also said that he tried to get Abdul Samad's assistance to participate in "Jihad activity" in Iraq and Afghanistan, but eventually went to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, where he underwent training in weapons and combat tactics at a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET) camp. After that, he claimed to have stayed with Shahid Bilal in Karachi from June 2006 to June 2007, until Bilal instructed him to return to India via Bangladesh and Nepal. He said that he stayed in Hyderabad for much of the summer of 2007, using the e-mail ID "mujahid@yahoo.co.in" (sic) with the

password: expert.

¶18. (C) Ravendra Prasad, the police superintendent for Davangere, told us that Raziuddin also claimed that Bilal was shot and killed in Pakistan, but emphasized that police in Hyderabad do not believe this to be true. Similarly, the superintendent said that the police do not believe Raziuddin's claim that a Pakistani intelligence agent named Abu Hamza committed the attack on Bangalore's Indian Institute of Science in 2005 that killed a professor and injured several others.

¶19. (C) According to the investigation report, Raziuddin also claimed that he met with SIMI activists and other extremists in India in September and November 2007, procuring a 9mm pistol, ammunition, and a dozen detonators. He said that he conspired with both Asadulla and Asif to hijack a truck containing hydrogen Peroxide to manufacture bombs and that he and Asadulla had stolen vehicles from various towns in Karnataka that he planned to use as vehicular bombs.

Raziuddin's targets

¶10. (C) Raziuddin told the police that he, along with Asif, Asadulla, and a SIMI activist named Adanan (aka Hafeez or Afeez) planned serial bomb blasts in multiple locations. The specific targets included:

-- police headquarters in Andhra Pradesh;
-- "important religious places," including targets belonging to the Muslim community, in Mangalore, Hubli-Dharwad, and Udupi (all in Karnataka);
-- Infosys (one of India's largest information technology companies) campuses in Bangalore and Mangalore;
-- "vital installations" in Mangalore, Hubli-Dharwad, and Bangalore;
-- beaches in Goa frequented by foreigners; and
-- prominent people opposed to Islam.

Police still investigating

¶11. (C) Bidari cautioned that the police and other Indian government agencies were still in the process of investigating most of Raziuddin's claims. In particular, he said that the police had not yet been able to verify Raziuddin's travels, except to Saudi Arabia and Kashmir. He emphasized that the police did not yet know if Raziuddin actually traveled to Pakistan, trained in an LET camp, or had actual contact with known terrorist suspects like Shahid Bilal. Bidari did say, however, that Raziuddin's family includes known, hard-core extremists and that Raziuddin harbors extremist views himself. Bidari also speculated that if Raziuddin and Asadulla were well-connected terrorist operatives, they would have been well-funded, and would not have had to steal motorcycles, an activity that increased the risk that police would detect them.

¶12. (C) Prasad told us that Raziuddin does seem to have knowledge of explosives and that he suspects that Raziuddin may have participated in the August 2007 bombings in Hyderabad. He said, however, that Raziuddin has denied any involvement in those attacks. (Local press reported on February 13, however, that Raziuddin confessed while undergoing "narcoanalysis" -- interrogation while under the influence of police-administered drugs -- to placing one of the Hyderabad bombs.)

Home Secretary notes concern

¶13. (C) Karnataka's Home Secretary, Vatsala Watsa, whose portfolio includes both security and transportation issues, told us that she is following the case closely. She emphasized that the police are still only in the preliminary phase of investigation, but admitted that the arrestees appeared to have intentions of committing terrorist acts.

She was less sure, however, of their actual capabilities. Watsa expressed particular concern about the targeting of Infosys, and told us that her administration is currently in negotiations with many of Bangalore's high-tech companies to create a government force, modeled on India's Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), that could provide armed security to private companies. (CISF forces currently provide security at government-owned facilities like ports and airports.) She added that she is also concerned that an extremist group may infiltrate one of these companies, either to perpetrate a cyber attack or conduct other types of terrorist activities.

Comment

¶14. (C) Karnataka police officials are taking this investigation very seriously. While they advised us repeatedly that they are still in the early stages of investigation, it is clear that they believe that they have uncovered a significant group of actual or potential terrorists. They have also been very cooperative with us, willing to share information openly about the case, and have promised additional information sharing as the investigation continues. We asked Bidari if the USG might be able to offer any assistance, but he said that none was needed at this time.

¶15. (U) This message was coordinated with Embassy New Delhi. We will submit a separate cable for the Visas Viper program.

HOPPER